

Erie County Opiate Epidemic Task Force Meeting Minutes



Location: Erie County Fire Training Academy

Date: Tuesday, 6 Dec 2016

Time: 5:15 - 7:15 PM

Attendees:

Agenda items

- 1) The group is pursuing a Tree of Remembrance to be put up in the Rath Building. Details should be finalized by 9 December.
- 2) Discussion with Charles from "Addict 2 Addict Peer & Family Support." The organization's activities include hosting family support groups at various locations in Erie County (Buffalo, Akron, Hamburg, Cheektowaga). They are also hosting a Community Forum on Saturday, 17 December, from 2-4 PM at the Frank Merriweather Library.
- 3) Discussion of interventions and "voluntary vs. mandated" treatment.
 - a) Some people favor aggressive intervention, to get the person who uses diverted into treatment before they have self-inflicted too much damage to themselves and their future careers.
 - b) However, an opinion was expressed that interventions and "interventionists" aren't very effective; rehabilitation efforts are most effective when the person who uses has mental and emotional "buy-in" in addition to a safe physical environment. The disease prevents clear thinking so the moments of clarity need to be utilized.
 - c) There is general agreement that the short-term treatment paid for by insurance companies (up to 28 days) does not provide support necessary to maintain abstinence. Follow-up care, longer treatment availability and ongoing support are all important to strengthen recovery.
- 4) Discussion of mental health and substance abuse; many attendees feel that the two health issues go hand-in-hand, and that treatment (whether in-patient or out-patient) is more effective when it addresses both aspects.
- 5) "YouTube initiative": videos to families for how to have the difficult conversations of "are you having a problem" and how to approach it would be beneficial.
- 6) Memorial Wall: One of the groups in attendance (Seneca Strong?) has built a portable wall to commemorate those people who have passed away from their addictions. This workgroup is considering something similar.
- 7) NYS Opiate Court: A new court (similar to the county's "drug court") is being created at the state level.
- 8) Next scheduled meeting: Tuesday, 3 Jan 2016.